



City of Richmond

Chloramine Conversion FAQ's

Question and Answers

Converting to Chloramine?

As the City of Richmond prepares for Surface Water Blending, the disinfection process of water treatment will also change. This change from chlorine to chloramines is necessary as Richmond transitions to the use of legislatively mandated surface water. Chloramine is a better choice as a final disinfectant than chlorine alone because chloramine produces lower levels of disinfectant by-products like trihalomethanes, suspected carcinogens that form when chlorine mixes with natural organic substances in water. The conversion will enable the City of Richmond to comply with more stringent regulatory standards. Chloramine is more stable than chlorine and lasts longer in the distribution system. This provides increased protection from bacterial and viral contamination.

What is chloramine?

Chloramine is a disinfectant used in drinking water to remove bacteria and viruses. It consists of chlorine and ammonia.

When will the conversion occur?

The City of Richmond plans to begin using chloramines to disinfect its public drinking water in September of 2017.

How can I remove chloramine from my water?

Chloramine cannot be removed by boiling water, adding salt, or letting water stand still. Treatment devices to reduce chloramine levels are available. These devices should be independently tested and specifically certified to reduce chloramine. Although home filtration systems will reduce the level of chloramine from water, it will not remove it completely.

What types of businesses will be affected?

Businesses using highly processed water may be affected. Types of businesses may include: laboratories, microchip manufacturers, biotech companies, soft drink bottlers, photography labs, or restaurants or seafood suppliers with fish tanks. Businesses should contact a water treatment professional or an equipment supplier to review their treatment process.

Why is chloramine harmful for fish and amphibians?

Fish and some amphibians and reptiles pass water through their gills directly into the bloodstream. Like chlorine, chloraminated water can do harm if passed directly into the bloodstream. Pet owners should visit local pet stores and pet suppliers for dechloramination products and instructions.

What types of special precautions do kidney dialysis patients have to take?

Chloramines, like chlorine, must be removed from the water before it can be used in kidney dialysis machines. Kidney dialysis patients should contact their physician or local kidney dialysis center for guidance on modifications to dialysis machines and procedures. Medical centers that perform dialysis are responsible for purifying the water that enters the dialysis machines.

Kidney dialysis patients can still bathe, drink and cook with chloraminated water. The digestive process neutralizes the chloramines before they reach the bloodstream. It's only when water interacts directly in the blood stream, as in dialysis, that chloramines must be removed.